

Western Asia Today

A Survey

The following report is a summary of the findings of a two-day conference held in New York, September 19-20. This conference was attended by 192 persons from all sections of the United States, including former Ambassadors to Turkey, consular agents, teachers from American colleges in Turkey, business men, physicians and missionaries. At least eighty-one of those in attendance had been residents of the Turkish Empire in diplomatic, educational or humanitarian service. Many of these had resided in Turkey for twenty years or more and nearly all had returned since the beginning of the war.

The following statement was prepared by Dr. James L. Barton, Chairman of the Committeemen. It was later carefully reviewed, adopted by the conference, and may therefore be regarded as a thoroughly considered statement representing the judgment of those who have most intimate acquaintance with conditions in Western Asia.

AMOUNT REQUIRED TO MEET IMMEDIATE NEEDS

"By '*Need*' we mean *merely* what is required *to save from death* those who are now in a condition of abject want. In presenting this estimate we include only those who are reported by our distributors to be *immediately accessible*, multitudes of them *perishing daily* and all of whom might be saved were resources adequate.

In making this estimate we have fixed the smallest sum that can be considered as approximately sufficient to keep the breath of life in the bodies of these homeless, helpless, starving masses,—who depend upon the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief to save them from inevitable death. We place this amount at five dollars a month. There are, some in areas where industrial relief is being organized, who can live on less than this, while in other areas several times this amount will be required.

We record the number of accessible refugees, according to latest reports of relief agents in the different fields, as follows:

<i>In Asia Minor</i>	<i>Refugees</i>	<i>Accessible</i>
Armenians	350,000	180,000
Greeks	800,000	160,000
<i>Caucasus</i>	300,000	140,000
<i>Syria and Mesopotamia</i>		
Syrians	1,250,000	200,000
Armenians	50,000	25,000
Damascus	100,000	
Palestine and Egypt	100,000	100,000
Persia	1,000,000	130,000
	3,950,000	935,000

These figures show a *destitute refugee body of nearly four millions* within the field of operation of this committee, of whom at least 935,000 are within reach of our agents.

At least 400,000 of the accessible destitute are children without fathers, and many of them without mothers.

\$30,000,000 REQUIRED TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF THE WINTER AND EARLY SPRING

The Committee has taken as a basis, minimum costs as reported by our distributors and others personally acquainted with local conditions in the areas of destitution. The largest possible allowance has also been made for the development of self-support through industrial relief. The minimum budget with which to meet the most urgent needs of the winter and early spring, by the most conservative computation, amounts to \$30,000,000.

As rapidly as our agents get to refugees now inaccessible the amount needed for relief will increase, and when the time comes for returning these exiles to their ruined, ravished homes vastly larger sums will be required which will demand special consideration and large government subsidies, but unfortunately at present government appropriations are impracticable.**

ASIA MINOR

Audited reports covering relief work in the Ottoman Empire have been received through diplomatic channels from Constantinople accounting in detail for the receipts and disbursements of all relief funds up to July 1st of the present year. These reports, signed and certified by well-known American citizens and neutral diplomatic representatives, show the exact amount of relief that has been administered by American citizens or other responsible representatives in more than thirty interior distribution centers. Dr. Charles F. Gates, President of Robert College, the Chairman of the Central Relief Committee in Constantinople, in his extended report says: "The Ottoman Government has not opposed any obstacles to our work. * * * In some places the local governors have recognized the great usefulness of the work and have helped our agents to secure food at reduced prices."

The report gives details of the efforts being made at the various centers to keep the breath of life in the bodies of the homeless widows and orphans, once prosperous, but now absolutely dependent upon this relief until they can be restored to their homes. "In some places the Armenians who were deported are beginning to drift back to their old homes and there are some signs which seem to indicate that the Government may take measures to restore them. But they are coming back in a state of destitution, finding their homes in ruins, their lands laid waste, their cattle and implements gone. They will need help to reestablish themselves, and they will need much help for they have lost everything." * * * "We plead for a large increase in the money with which to feed the starving. America has given so generously to feed the sufferers of all the world, I am sure she would provide the money if she knew the needs of the people. We must not let go now."

THE RUSSIAN CAUCASUS

A large portion of the 300,000 homeless refugees in the Russian Caucasus were last summer driven by military operations into southern Russia. F. Willoughby Smith, the American Consul to Tiflis, reported that when he left Tiflis these refugees were passing through that city northward at the rate of 5,000 a day. Our commissioners are now serving them by means of soup kitchens and such employment as can be procured in Vladikavkaz and Samara where they are gathered in large refugee camps. The commissioners are cabling through the American Consul at Vladivostok for funds not only to maintain soup kitchens, but also to help return these people to their homes or colonize them in Siberia on a self-supporting basis at the earliest possible date.

** The above summary was approved before the recent advance of the British Army in Palestine and change in the Ottoman Empire. Recent political and military developments have made accessible a large proportion of the 3,050,000 refugees heretofore inaccessible, and have greatly enlarged the committee's opportunity and needs.*

PERSIA

Dr. Harry Pratt Judson, President of the University of Chicago, as the leader of the Persian Relief Commission of twenty members, has now reached Persia and is engaged in organizing relief along industrial lines wherever possible that will prevent the awful harvest of death of last winter when people "died of starvation by wholesale." Recent cablegrams from the American Minister to Persia, John Lawrence Caldwell, and from American Consul Gordon Paddock report the arrival at Hamadan, within the British lines, of the remnant of 80,000 Assyrian Christian refugees from Urumia, 15,000 having perished en route. Rev. W. A. Shedd, D.D., Chairman of the Western Persia Relief Committee and later American Vice-Consul, died of cholera while leading these 65,000 refugees to safety. A letter written in Urumia before his departure but received in New York since his death, says in part: "The suffering in the city is shown by the fact that we are burying about twenty famine victims every day. This does not represent the whole number and of course includes only the city. The funds you have sent are saving thousands." "70,000 starving in Teheran alone." Under the leadership of Dr. Judson's commission, we must this winter prevent a repetition of such wholesale destitution and death. A well-known representative of the State Department says: "This is the best combination that we know of patriotism and philanthropy."

MESOPOTAMIA

Thousands of refugees, most of them women and orphans, are finding their way from their hiding places in the mountains and deserts to points within the British lines, and are being cared for temporarily by our commissioners in refugee camps in Bagdad and vicinity.

PALESTINE AND SYRIA

The rapid advance of General Allenby's army has brought within reach Relief Workers in Palestine, whole provinces and vilayets with hundreds of thousands of Syrians, Armenians, Greeks, and others, whose ports have been blockaded for four years, tens of thousands of whose relatives and countrymen have starved, and who themselves, reduced to the last stages of destitution, are now a challenge to American philanthropy in providing the necessities of life for the coming winter, after which they will very quickly return to self-support and prosperity.

INDUSTRIAL RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

Contributors may depend upon the wisdom, business sense, and practical philanthropy of our commissioners in the various areas to see that industrial self-support is developed at every opportunity. Moreover, the people themselves, the subject races of the Ottoman Empire, are for the most part frugal, enterprising and industrious, and will eagerly avail themselves of every opportunity to reestablish self-support and their once prosperous homes.

A TASK OF GOVERNMENTAL MAGNITUDE—BUT NO GOVERNMENT AID AVAILABLE

We rejoice that our own government is able to loan millions of dollars to Belgium, France, Serbia, and other allied nations with which the war orphans and other dependents of these nations may be supported. Unfortunately there is at present no friendly, paternal government to which our government can legitimately make loans for use in behalf of these millions of homeless destitute in Western Asia. Therefore our task is not merely that of supplementing by charity, government grants, but rather a task of governmental magnitude in which, temporarily at least, the full responsibility rests upon the shoulders of private philanthropy. As soon as peace and order are again restored, an effort will be made to provide proper governmental assistance to these unfortunate people who because of their pro-ally sympathy have probably suffered as a result of the war more than any other people.

NATION-WIDE DRIVE FOR \$30,000,000 JANUARY 12-19

Last April the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief projected a nation-wide campaign for the dates of November 23-30, 1918, for the purpose of securing adequate funds to meet the winter's relief requirements.

These dates were determined upon in conference with Y. M. C. A. leaders and other officials and were chosen for the purpose of avoiding conflict with the Y. M. C. A. and other financial campaigns at that time scheduled for the early autumn.

Later developments and enlargements of the United War Work Campaign for \$170,500,000 for the later dates of November 11-19 resulted in a resolution by the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief

1. To postpone the Armenian-Syrian Relief Campaign and give all possible assistance to the United War Work campaign.
2. To realign the Relief campaign for the dates of January 12-19 in order to secure the fullest possible cooperation of the National organizations, committees and workers engaged in the war work campaign.

ADVANCE PAYMENTS

Most cities and communities having war chests have already made full provision for their quotas on the \$30,000,000 basis by appropriating from their war chests. Wherever it is practicable for a city, church or individual contributor to make advanced payments previous to January 12-19 without affecting contributions to the War Work fund, November 11-19, such payments will help the committee to meet the requirements of the early winter months when demands are heaviest for funds with which to purchase advantageously grain and necessary supplies for the winter. Receipts for such contributions will be sent in a form that can be presented to local committees as vouchers and credited on the state and city's quota. The remainder of the quota will be expected in connection with the simultaneous campaign January 12-19. The closing day of the campaign, January 19, by the old Gregorian calendar is Christmas Day, as observed by the Armenians and the Eastern Church. The funds will be at once cabled as America's Christmas gift to the widows, orphans and destitute of Bible lands.

ONE HUNDRED CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR GOES FOR RELIEF— NONE FOR EXPENSES

All printing, postage, and administrative expenses, even the cost of cabling the money, are met privately without deductions from contributions.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF

One Madison Avenue, New York
NATIONAL COMMITTEE

James L. Barton.....Chairman
Samuel T. Dutton.....Vice-Chairman
Charles V. Vickrey.....Secretary
Cleveland H. Dodge.....Treasurer

Chairmen of Local Committees are Ex-officio Members of the National Committee

Hon. William Howard Taft Hon. Charles Evans Hughes Hon. Elihu Root Hon. Henry Morgenthau Hon. Abram Elkus Hon. William B. Millar George T. Scott Charles R. Crane Frederick H. Allen Charles E. Beury Arthur J. Brown Edwin M. Bulkley John B. Calvert Wm. L. Chamberlain Charles W. Eliot William T. Ellis James Cardinal Gibbons	Jerome D. Greene Rt. Rev. David H. Greer Fred P. Haggard Harold A. Hatch William I. Haven Alexander J. Hemphill Myron T. Herrick Frank W. Jackson Hamilton Holt Arthur Curtiss James Woodbury G. Langdon Frederick Lynch Vance C. McCormick Charles S. MacFarland John R. Mott Frank Mason North George A. Plimpton	Rt. Rev. P. Rhinelander Karl Davis Robinson William W. Rockwell Wm. Jay Schieffelin Albert Shaw William Sloane Edward Lincoln Smith James M. Speers Oscar S. Straus Harry A. Wheeler Stanley White Ray Lyman Wilbur Talcott Williams Stephen S. Wise Harry Pratt Judson Col. Wm. Cooper Proctor Hon. H. B. F. MacFarland
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